

Understanding Pain Relief with Acupuncture & Traditional Chinese Medicine

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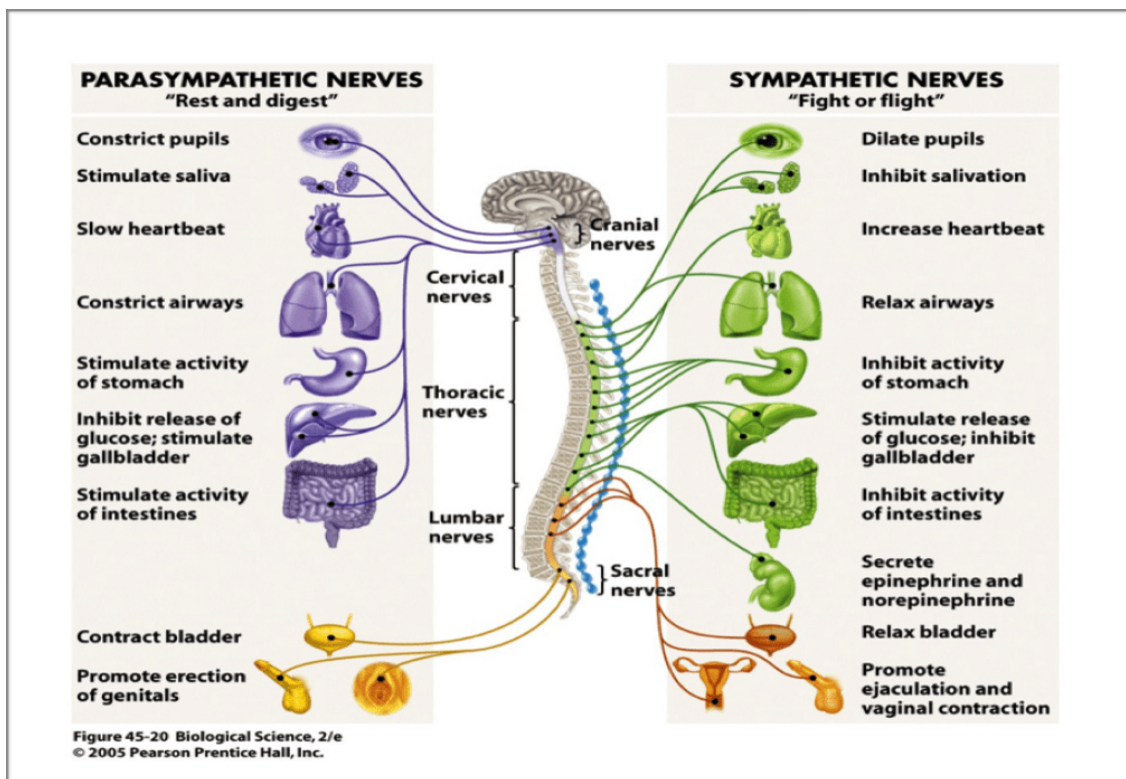
In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) all conditions or diseases are differentiated into syndromes that identify the root cause as well as determine a treatment plan to address the chief symptom. This holistic approach therefore not only treats symptoms, but also focuses on preventing the condition from worsening or coming back. Pain may be the most commonly experienced symptom in one form or another and can efficiently be treated using Acupuncture and TCM.

UNDERSTANDING THE CAUSE OF PAIN (EX: HEADACHES)

Pain can have a major impact on our daily lives and negatively affect our quality of life. One of the more commonly experienced conditions of pain is a headache, which is a disorder of the nervous system. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 50% of adults have experienced a headache at least once in the last year. The levels of severity varies, from minor discomfort to completely debilitating. Known causes include:

- Stress
- Hypertension
- Lack of sleep
- Fatigue
- Menstrual/hormone-related
- Environmental factors (pressure and temperature changes)
- Post-concussion

Excluding autoimmune diseases, pain itself is not a disease, but our interpretation of internal or external stimuli that has a negative effect on our body systems. For example; a stress headache engages our body's sympathetic nervous system, which is in charge of the fight or flight response. This system then releases stress hormones and tenses our muscles in order to help us react faster when faced with adversity; we are on high alert. In today's fast-paced, high pressure society, we are placed in this state more frequently and for prolonged periods of time. The physiological affects of this dismantles homeostasis, causes excessive muscle tension (often in our neck and shoulders), and restricts the opportunity for the parasympathetic nervous system to take over and allow for recovery. Important functions of the parasympathetic nervous system that are inhibited include rest, digestion, decreasing heart rate, and restoring calm. Have you ever been under excess stress and suffered from headaches, body pain, digestive issues, or had trouble sleeping? These are tell tale signs that the energetic pathways may be blocked, and/or the nervous system and hormones out of balance.



UNDERSTANDING TREATMENT OPTIONS

In the Western medicine world, the cause of headaches is often unknown and predominantly treated with pain killers. Downsides to this are that the root cause of the symptoms are not identified or addressed to prevent the issue from worsening or coming back. Also, over time, prolonged use of pain killer medication can damage the Liver, Stomach, or Kidneys, and actually increase the instances of pain, muscle aches, or headaches.

TCM uses Acupuncture and/or herbal medicines to treat headaches from a holistic point of view by first identifying the root cause and determining which type of syndrome the headache belongs to. In this way, an individualized treatment plan is designed to specifically address your unique etiology and symptoms. Energy blockages caused by stress or any of the above-mentioned causes of pain, lead to both Qi and Blood stagnation, which according to TCM theory is characterized by pain. Over time stagnation can not only cause pain, headaches, and discomfort, but also lead to a rise in blood pressure, which in the long-term can have even more detrimental health effects to be concerned with. Acupuncture is a safe and effective intervention to stimulate and regulate our organ systems, restore balance, and reestablish the smooth flow of energy, which ultimately will stop pain. On top of all that, there are nearly no side effects to worry about from Acupuncture! That is, except to experience less pain, improved sleep, better digestion, and feel more clear-minded, and less stressed!

WHAT NEXT?

If this feels relatable, or you are a chronic sufferer of pain, headaches, or muscle tension, what are you waiting for? Come into Richmond Chiropractic & Wellness Centre to experience Acupuncture for yourself and discuss any questions you might have about TCM today! Dr. Kim will always be happy to educate you and get you back to your best self, pain-free!

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